Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

## REMEMBERING SAM SMITH

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the life of Sam Smith from Las Vegas, NV. Mr. Smith passed away last month.

Mr. Smith was a retired firefighter and the founder of the bookstore and treasured community establishment, Native Son. Native Son operated in West Last Vegas for 17 years, and throughout that time Mr. Smith was its heart and soul. Mr. Smith offered free math and reading classes and helped many students prepare for fire department entrance exams. He had a saying, ''People who study calculus don't go to jail.'' Mr. Smith cared about the people in his community, and he worked to improve their lives.

Mr. Smith helped people like Trina Jiles become the first Black woman in the Clark County Fire Department. When she came into Native Son in 1995 he told her there were no Black women firefighters and asked how many push-ups she could do. When she did 20, he told her she would be all right and began teaching her in his free math and reading classes. Soon after, she passed all of her tests and became Clark County's first Black female firefighter. She went on to work her way up the department to become an arson investigator.

Through his years of service, Sam Smith was a fixture in the West Las Vegas community. I appreciate all he has done, and I celebrate his life.

## CONSERVING LA MOSQUITIA

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to briefly draw the Senate's attention to a recent announcement made by Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernández concerning his government's efforts to secure and preserve a newly discovered archaeological site in the eastern part of his country. The area is part of La Mosquitia, a large swath of tropical rain forest along the Mosquito Coast in eastern Honduras, which also extends into northeastern Nicaragua.

Reaching the remote forest is accomplished primarily by air or water, and it was airborne sensing technology in 2012 that first uncovered the ancient site, now revealed to be as much as 1,000 years old. The site is believed by some to be the location of the mythic White City, a safe haven where indigenous populations took refuge from Spanish conquistadores. However, archeologists Christopher Fisher of Colorado State University and Oscar Neil Cruz of the Honduran Institute of Anthropology and History and ethno-botanist Mark Plotkin of the Amazon Conservation Team who reached the site earlier this month believe the discovery could be even more significant as just one of many sites that may reveal an entire lost civilization.

La Mosquitia is also the home of the Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve, a World Heritage Site that has twice been placed on UNESCO's world heritage in danger list, most recently in 2011. The designation was the result of an investigation that revealed rampant deforestation, primarily by cattle herders seeking to meet the demand for beef in the United States, in addition to illegal hunting and fishing. Perhaps one of the most significant aspects of the Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve's designation is that it is representative of the threats to all of La Mosquitia.

That is why President Hernández's announcement is so important. La Mosquitia is not just a treasure of the Honduran people; it has preserved centuries of cultural artifacts and is now home to a multitude of plant and animal life that has remained largely undisturbed by the outside world.

President Hernández's commitment to preserve these archeological sites from looters and other criminal activity and to protect the broader forest area by replanting the jungle and countering deforestation deserves our support. I look forward to working with the Government of Honduras on how the United States may be able to assist its conservation efforts.

## NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a copy of my remarks at the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

We're here today to review the president's fiscal year 2016 budget request for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the independent federal agency responsible for regulating the safety of our nation's commercial nuclear power plants and other nuclear materials.

This is the first time in many years that the subcommittee has held a hearing to examine the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's budget.

It is also the first of several hearings that the subcommittee will hold this year on nuclear power. These hearings are important because nuclear power provides about 20 percent of our nation's electricity and more than 60 percent of our carbon-free electricity.

I plan to focus my questions today on four main areas:

1. Licensing nuclear waste repositories;
2. Avoiding excessive regulations;
3. Licensing for new and existing reactors; and
4. Making sure the agency is running effectively

First, we must solve the 25-year-old stalemate about what to do with used fuel from our nuclear reactors to ensure that nuclear power has a strong future in this country.

Later this year, I will reintroduce bipartisan legislation with Senators Feinstein, Murkowski and perhaps others, to create both temporary and permanent storage sites for nuclear waste. Also, Senator Feinstein and I plan to include a pilot program for nuclear waste storage in the Energy and Water appropriations bill, as we have for the past three years.

The new sites we'd seek to establish through the legislation Senator Feinstein and I are reintroducing this year would not take the place of Yucca Mountain—we have more than enough waste to fill Yucca Mountain to its legal capacity—but rather would complement it.

This legislation is consistent with the president's Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future.

But let me be clear: Yucca Mountain can and should be part of the solution. Federal law designates Yucca Mountain as the nation's repository for used nuclear fuel.

The Nuclear Waste Fund, which is money that utilities have paid the government to dispose of their used nuclear fuel, has a balance of about $36 billion and there are still several steps to go in the licensing process for Yucca Mountain.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has a balance of unspent funding that you are supposed to use to continue the licensing process. But more resources will be required, so I think it's fair to ask the question:

Knowing that there are additional steps and they will cost money, why would you not request additional funds in your budget?

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission recently completed the Safety Evaluation Report that said Yucca Mountain met all of the safety requirements through ''the period of geologic stability.''

The commission and the Environmental Protection Agency define the ''period of geologic stability'' as one million years. To continue to oppose Yucca Mountain because of radiation concerns is to ignore science—as well as the law.

The next steps on Yucca Mountain include completing a supplemental environmental impact statement and restarting the hearings before the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board, which were suspended in September 2011.

Money is available for these activities, and I want to hear why there is no request to use it.

Federal law requires that nuclear power plants be built safely, but the law doesn't say it should be so hard and expensive to build and operate reactors that you can't do it.

A 2013 report by the Center for Strategic and International Studies found that up to 25 of our 99 nuclear reactors could close by 2020.

The decision to close a reactor could be due to a number of factors, including the low price of natural gas, and the wasteful wind production tax credit, which is so generous that in some markets wind producers can literally give their electricity away and still make a profit.

But the decision to close a reactor can also have to do with excessive and unnecessary regulations. I want to work with the commission to address this.

Over the next several decades, most of our 99 nuclear reactors will go through the commission's license renewal process to extend their licenses, which is critical to the future of nuclear power. I want to make sure that the commission is prepared for this additional work.

I also want to make sure the commission has devoted the appropriate resources to the licensing process to keep new reactors—like Watts Bar 2 in Tennessee—on time and on budget.

I have proposed that we build 100 new reactors, which may seem excessive, but not if

about 20 percent of our current capacity from coal goes offline by 2020 as projected by the Energy Information Administration. If this capacity were replaced entirely by nuclear power it would require building another 48 new, 1,250-megawatt reactors—which, by the way, would reduce our carbon emissions from electricity by another 14 percent. Add the reactors we may need to replace in the coming decades due to aging and other factors, and my proposal for 100 may not seem so high.

Additionally, the commission needs to move forward with new small modular reactors.

This subcommittee has provided funding to help small modular reactors get through the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's licensing process. I'd like to get your views on what you need to continue your efforts.

One of the challenges for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission is to ensure that the agency is running effectively and focusing staff on the right goals.

In fiscal year 2000, Congress appropriated about $470 million for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The budget request this year is more than $1 billion.

Much of the increase was due to the significant number of new reactor licenses that were anticipated—however most were never actually submitted. So, it is fair to ask whether this additional funding is being used for unnecessary regulation.

The best way to understand the importance of nuclear power is to look at the stories of three countries: Japan, Germany and the United Arab Emirates.

Japan and Germany have recently experienced what happens when a major manufacturing country loses its nuclear capacity. In Japan, the cost of generating electricity has increased 56 percent and Germany has among the highest household electricity rates in the European Union—both because they moved away from nuclear power.

The United Arab Emirates has shown what a country can do when a country decides to take advantage of nuclear power. By 2020, the Emirates will have completed four reactors that will provide nearly 25 percent of its annual electricity.

It will take building more nuclear reactors to avoid the path of Japan and Germany, and today's hearing is an important step to making sure the United States does what it must to unleash nuclear power.

I look forward to working with the commission and our Ranking Member, Senator Feinstein, who I will now recognize for an opening statement.

## CUBA'S CULTURE OF POVERTY CONUNDRUM

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I submit for inclusion in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD the following article regarding the early years of the Castro regime, the policies of which created a culture of poverty in Cuba, and converted a previously developing country into an underdeveloped, closed society.

The author, Professor Roland Alum, is a Garden State constituent, a longtime participant in civic activities, and has been a personal friend for three decades. He is a respected anthropologist and author whose writings have appeared in both major newspapers and academic journals.

This article, which appeared in Panoramas, an electronic journal at the University of Pittsburgh, touches upon sensitive topics apropos to the current U.S.-Cuba relationship.

I ask unanimous consent that the article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From Panoramas, Feb. 14, 2015]

### THE CUBAN CULTURE OF POVERTY CONUNDRUM

(By Roland Armando Alum)

#### INTRODUCTION

I propose here to re-examine certain aspects of life in ''Socialist Cuba,'' principally the so-called culture of poverty, as gauged relatively early in the Castro brothers regime by two U.S. socio-cultural anthropologists, the legendary Oscar Lewis and his protégée/associate Douglas Butterworth, whose research project 4.5 decades ago was surrounded by controversy and enigmas.

Unquestionably, the Fidel and Raúl Castro ''Revolutionary Government'' enjoyed an extraordinary initial popularity in 1959. Yet, the enthusiasm vanished as the duo hijacked the liberal-inspired anti-Batista rebellion that had been largely advanced by the then expanding middle-classes. Instead of delivering the promised ''pan con libertad'' (bread with liberty), the Castro siblings converted Cuba into a socio-spiritually and fiscally bankrupt, Marxist-Stalinist dystopia in which both, bread and liberty are scarce (Botín, 2010; Horowitz, 2008; Moore, 2008).

Cuba was the last Ibero-American colony to attain independence (1902); yet, by the 1950s, the island-nation was a leader in the Americas in numerous quality-of-life indicators. This record was reached notwithstanding instability and governmental corruption during the republican era (1902–58), including the 1952–58 bloody authoritarian dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. However, under the (now anachronistic octogenarian) Castros, Cuba became an impoverished, Orwellian closed society beleaguered by unproductivity, rampant corruption, humiliating rationing, human rights abuses, and—understandably—unprecedented mass emigration (Díaz-Briquets & Pérez-López, 2006; Horowitz, 2008).

#### CUBA'S CULTURE OF POVERTY CONUNDRUM

The Lewis and Butterworth project in 1969–70 is still, oddly, among the little known accounts of the early effects of the Castro family's regimentation. Supported by a Ford Foundation's nearly $300,000 grant, the professors intended to test Lewis's theory of the ''culture of poverty'' (or rather, sub-culture of poverty). They had innocently hypothesized that a culture of poverty (hereafter CoP) would not exist in a Marxist-oriented society, as they presupposed that the socially alienating conditions that engender it could develop among the poor solely in capitalist economies. Influenced by Marxism, Lewis in particular had cleverly problematized the commonalities of the poor's elusive quandary in well-known prior studies across different societies, notably among Mexicans and Puerto Ricans.

While poverty is defined in relative terms, the CoP was conceptualized as an amorphous corpus of socially transmitted self-defeating beliefs and interrelated values, such as: abandonment, alcoholism, authoritarianism, deficient work ethic, domestic abuse, fatalism, homophobia/machismo, hopelessness, illegitimacy, instant, gratification/present-time orientation, low social-civic consciousness, mother-centered families, sexism/misogyny, suspicion of authorities while holding expectations on government dependency, and so forth.

This ''psychology of the . . . oppressed . . . poor'' is considered a key obstacle to achieving vertical socio-economic mobility even in fluid social-class, more open societies, such as the U.S. Not all poor individuals develop a CoP, but being poor is a sine qua non condition.

Ever since its early stages as a separate discipline in the mid–1800s, anthropology's cornerstone has been the concept of ''culture.'' A century later, the notion drifted to everyday language; to wit, statements such as ''a culture of corruption'' became common in the media in reference to mindsets in government and corporations. I prefer the interpretation of culture by my own Pitt co-mentor, ''Jack'' Roberts (1964): ''a system for storing and retrieving information,'' which fits with the Lewis-Butterworth approach.

With initial high-level governmental welcome, one of the Lewis-Butterworth investigations entailed comprehensive interviews of former Havana slum-dwellers resettled in new buildings. In the research project's fourth book, The People of Buena Ventura, Butterworth (1980) admitted with disenchantment that his research project found sufficient social symptoms that met the CoP criteria, thus disproving the initial hypothesis expecting an absence of the CoP under socialism.

#### THE PROJECT'S SIGNIFICANCE

The Lewis-Butterworth ethnographic (descriptive, qualitative) work has various additional implications. It shed light for an evaluation of the Guevarist ''New Socialist Man'' archetype. Similarly, it informed an understanding of the dynamics that led to the spectacular 1980 Mariel boat exodus, when over 120,000 Cubans (some 1.2% of Cuba's population) ''voted with their feet.'' Ironically, the regime and its insensitive fans abroad still refer to the raggedy refugees with disdainful discourse as ''escoria'' (scum) and with the Marxist slur ''lumpen proletariat.'' Significantly, most Marielistas were born and/or enculturated under socialism, i.e., they personified the presumed ''New Man.'' Many of them, moreover, had been military conscripts, and/or had served time in the infamous gulag-type ''U.M.A.P.'' forced-labor camps created for political dissidents (particularly intellectuals and artists), Beatles' fans, gays, the unemployed, long-haired bohemians/hippies, Trotskyites, would-be emigrants (considered ''traitors''), and religious people (including Jehovah's Witnesses and Afro-Cuban folk-cults' practitioners), etc. (Núñez-Cedeño, et al., 1985). In fact, the Marielistas encompassed also an over-representation of Afro-Cubans, the demographic sector traditionally viewed as most vulnerable, and thus, among the expected prime beneficiaries of socialist redistribution.

Certainly, there were always poor Cubans—of all phenotypes—and conceivably, some version of the CoP existed pre–1959; but in my exchanges with Butterworth, he reconfirmed another remarkable finding. While acknowledging the social shortcomings of pre-revolutionary times, he could not document (for ex., through the collection of oral life-histories), a case for a pervasive, pre-revolutionary Lewisian CoP.

This in situ scrutiny of daily life fairly early in the Castros era corroborates previous and subsequent accounts by many Cubanologists and the much vilified and ever-expanding exile community. There exists a widespread CoP in Socialist Cuba, though not necessarily as a survivor of the ancien régime, but—as Butterworth deduced—a consequence of the nouveau régime. The authorities must have suspected, or ascertained through surveillance, about the prospective conclusions, given that the anthropologists were suddenly expelled from the country. They were accused of being U.S. spies, most of their research material was confiscated, and some ''informants'' (interviewees) were arrested and/or harassed.